Executive Committee—as if a moderate government could stay in power without the support of the forces that had beaten back the assault of the Bolsheviks in July and frustrated Kornilov's mutiny in August! The Bolshevist tide was again rising.

On the night of September 13, the plenary session of the Petrograd Soviet voted a resolution demanding that all power be given to the Soviets. Chkheidze put the question of confidence. A new session of the Soviet was called for September 22, and the left bloc obtained a majority of 513 against 474, with 67 abstentions. Trotsky was elected the new president of the Soviet. On September 20, the Bolsheviks gained the majority in the Soviet of Moscow.

The All-Russian Executive Committee remained the last stronghold of democratic forces in the nation, the last dam against the Bolshevist flood. The outcome of elections of municipal and rural councils held on the basis of universal suffrage in September gave it a new prestige. In rural elections, the S-R party was far ahead of all other groups. Among thousands of members of the rural councils, only a few Cadets and Bolsheviks were elected. The Cadets gained a few seats in urban councils while the Bolsheviks obtained the votes in rear garrisons and a majority in industrial precincts in Petrograd, Moscow, and other large cities. But the great majority of urban voters cast their ballots for the S-R, the Laborites, and the Mensheviks. Although these elections were not a substitute for the Constituent Assembly, they revealed the mood prevailing in the country.

The democratic leaders faced a dilemma. If they supported the new Provisional Government, headed by Kerensky but dominated by the Cadets, they would be acting against the wishes of the majority of the people; if they refused to support it, they would have to take power into their own hands or form a united front with the Bolsheviks. The solution could have been the prompt convocation of the Constituent Assembly, but this course was no longer possible. After the government had postponed the elections until December, preparations had been slowed down, and it was extremely difficult to make up the lost time.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION

In the midst of the political confusion, the Executive Committee decided to call a convention of representatives of all democratic organizations in the nation: the Soviet, army committees, rural and municipal councils, co-operative unions, and associations of national minorities. The Soviet of Petrograd, now under the control of the